

APPENDIX E:

Talking Points for Promoting CalFresh to Older Adults

Older adults are often reluctant to apply for CalFresh benefits due to perceived barriers. These talking points can help affirm the client's dignity, address client concerns about applying, and highlight the many benefits of participation.

- **CalFresh is a nutrition program, not a welfare program.**
 - ▶ CalFresh can help you and your family buy the food you need for good health.
 - ▶ CalFresh is designed to help people when money is tight. Sometimes people need a little extra help. You've worked hard and paid for this benefit.
 - ▶ CalFresh allows you to have more money to purchase other things you need such as medicine, utilities, and personal items.
- **CalFresh is easy to use.**
 - ▶ Each month CalFresh benefits are issued on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card – like an ATM card. The EBT card can be used at most grocery stores, discount chains, farmers' markets, and neighborhood stores.
 - ▶ You may be eligible to use your EBT card in certified restaurants in some counties.
 - ▶ If you are not mobile enough to get to the store, you may choose someone to go shopping for you, using your CalFresh benefits. This person is considered your "authorized representative." It could be a friend, a relative, a caretaker, someone who works for an agency, or anyone else you choose to "represent" you.
- **Applying for CalFresh is made easier for older adults.**
 - ▶ Special rules make it easier for adults aged 60 or older to get CalFresh (e.g., no gross income test, no requirement for a face-to-face interview).
 - ▶ You don't need to go into a county CalFresh office to apply. All communication can be conducted via mail, phone, fax, or online.
 - ▶ A phone interview is your right and is an option available to you. Just make sure you request it when the eligibility worker calls to set up an appointment with you.
 - ▶ Recent changes in program regulations may make you eligible, even if you weren't eligible in the past.
 - ▶ If everyone in the household is either aged 60 or older, or has a disability, recertification is only required every two years, and no quarterly/semi-annual reporting is required; you only need to report when changes occur to your household composition, income, or address.
- **CalFresh helps the state and local economy.**
 - ▶ Using CalFresh helps your state and local economies. Every dollar in CalFresh benefits generates \$1.79 in economic activity.¹

¹ Shimada, Tia, *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates – The Impact of CalFresh Participation on State and Local Economies*, California Food Policy Advocates, February 2012. Accessed March 9, 2012, <http://cfpa.net/lost-dollars-empty-plates-2012>

- ▶ If everyone who is eligible for CalFresh participated in the program, approximately \$4.9 billion in additional federal nutrition assistance dollars would come into California each year. This federal money would generate approximately \$8.7 billion in additional economic activity statewide per year.
- **Apply for CalFresh. It is worth the benefit.**
 - ▶ Sixteen dollars is the *minimum* benefit for one person on CalFresh. The maximum benefit for a one-person household is \$200/month.² Even with just \$16/month, that adds up to \$192/year.³
 - ▶ Would you throw away a coupon for \$16?



- **You've earned these benefits.**
 - ▶ Receiving CalFresh benefits does not mean you are taking the benefit away from someone you think may deserve it more. Everyone who applies and is determined to be eligible will get CalFresh benefits. The USDA sets aside funds for the program, and when people who are eligible don't participate in the program, millions of dollars go unused. This is money that can help stimulate your local economy and help create jobs in your community.
 - ▶ You worked hard and the taxes you paid helped to create CalFresh. Now it's time to let it help you buy the healthy foods you like to eat.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP Benefits October 2011-2012." Accessed March 9, 2012, http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/applicant_recipients/eligibility.htm

³ Barber, L and N. Dowd Eisenhower, "SNAP and the Aging Network," Webinar National Council on Aging, March 2012. Slides 22 and 26.